

Call for applications: PhD position in cognitive science

The perceptual and cognitive markers of flavored products naturalness: a cross-cultural perspective

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES:

Consumers' expectations are generally well known but poorly understood. However, a proper understanding of consumer's expectations is needed to reduce the failure rate of new products in the market by providing better pre-launch decision criteria.

Naturalness features among the main expectations of consumers in different fields. 80% of consumers were interested in looking for naturalness in the food sector (TNS, 2012). Natural products represent one of the only sources of growth in the sector of the DPH (Drugstore, Perfumery, and Hygiene) (LSA, Trade & Consumption, article of 14/09/17).

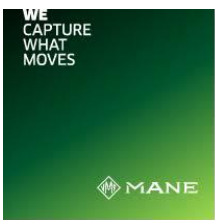
Even if there is a large consensus in the field of consumer research that naturalness features among the main consumers' expectations, the notion of naturalness is still vague and poorly understood (Roman et al., 2017). Moreover, the sensory and cognitive markers that trigger the naturalness category remain to be identified especially in the aromatic products domain.

The general objective of the present PhD project is to identify the different properties (olfactory, visual and semantic) associated with the category of naturalness, to measure the strength of implicit associations using methodologies from cognitive science, and the robustness of these associations across distinct cultural areas. The results obtained will highlight the perceptual and cognitive markers of perceived naturalness, and will be exploited by marketing and R&D departments to better interpret and meet the expectations of consumers regarding naturalness.

RESEARCH AND PRIVATE PARTNERS:

Created in January 2011, the Lyon Neuroscience Research Center (CRNL) integrates the multidisciplinary expertise of 380 members (14 teams) for a synergistic approach of brain organization, cognitive functions and mental states, and of related brain disorders.

The Institut Paul Bocuse research Center (IPBR, Lyon, France) is a non-profit research unit dedicated to the scientific investigation of the various factors (social, economic, cognitive and physiological) that underlie and influence human eating behaviors. The Center stands out for its strong roots in societal and industrial contemporary challenges. The Food Cognition Group to which the selected candidate will be attached focuses on the mechanisms of flavor perception as well as on the development, the structure and the content of food concepts/categories.



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MANE Flavor & Fragrance Manufacturer, is the first French group and one of the worldwide leaders of the Fragrance and Flavour industry industry. Family owned and run since 1871, MANE serves the leaders of the food, drink, hygiene, beauty and luxury industry around the world. The group's headquarters are based in Le Bar Sur Loup (Alpes Maritimes, France) and has 25 manufacturing sites and 47 R&D centers worldwide. MANE perfumers and flavourists create unique perfumes and flavours addressing consumers' expectations for distinctive sensorial experiences in their daily life.

PHD SUPERVISION

- Thesis co-supervisor:

Dr. Moustafa Bensafi, Research Director at Lyon Neuroscience Research Center (CRNL, Lyon)

- Thesis Co-supervisor:

Dr. Jérémie Lafraire, Research Group Leader in Cognitive Science (IPBR), research associate at Institut Jean Nicod (CNRS-EHESS-ENS, Paris, Ulm)

- Scientific contact point at MANE: Hélène ALLAIN, Head of the sensory analysis department at Mane (Bar Sur Loup)

MAIN MISSIONS

The PhD candidate is expected to:

- Review the existing literature on perceived naturalness in the field of consumer research.
- Formulate original research hypotheses
- Learn standard methodologies in psychophysics (e.g. Implicit Association Test and the Go/No go Association Task)
- Contribute to the design of the experiments
- Conduct the statistical analyses
- Write scientific papers targeting top ranked international journals
- Transfer the results to the company (deliver interim reports, transfer the methodologies)

PROFIL AND ELIGIBILITY

The candidates must have obtained a master's level degree in cognitive science (or related: psychology, neuroscience, neurophysiology) or food engineering before taking up the position.

- Strong skills in statistics
- Taste for both theoretical and empirical questions
- Excellent communication skills
- Real interest for translating scientific results and methodologies into deliverables directly exploitable by the company
- International mobility
- Fluent in both oral and written English
- Knowledge of French will be appreciated but is not mandatory



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CONDITIONS:

- January 2019-January 2022 : 36 month PhD position IPBR/MANE (hired by Mane company but based at IPBR and affiliated to the Food Cognition Group)
- Salary: PhD position 36920 € gross/year

LOCATION

The PhD student will be mainly based at IPBR (Lyon).
Regular stay at CRNL and Mane (Bar-sur-Loup, 06)
Potential field work abroad

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Candidates are requested to submit the following application materials in a single pdf-file to jeremie.lafraire@institutpaulbocuse.com & moustafa.bensafi@cnrs.fr: (i) CV (ii) cover letter (iii) at least one letter of recommendation, (iv) all available transcripts of grades and copies of the diploma (v) master dissertation.

The deadline for application is September 16th 2018